

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee** held in Talla nan Ros, King Street, Kingussie on Thursday 25 September 2014 at 10.30 am

Present:

Ms J Douglas
Mr D Fallows
Mr L Fraser

Mr M Green
Mr C Macaulay
Mrs L MacDonald

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Inverness City Manager
Ms L Cowie, Ward Manager, Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey
Ms A Clark, Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Office
Mr D Greig, Policy Co-ordinator, Climate Change Team, Chief Executive's Office
Mr C Simpson, Tourism Co-ordinator, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager, Development and Infrastructure Service
Mr C Kemp, Area Roads and Community Works Manager, Community Services
Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector C Gough, Highland South Area Commander, Police Scotland
Inspector K MacLeod, Local Area Inspector, Police Scotland
Group Manager R Scott, Local Senior Officer for Highland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mrs L MacDonald in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr B Lobban and Mr G Rimell.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Item 7 – Ms J Douglas (Non-financial)
Item 14 – Mr L Fraser (Non-financial)

Mr D Fallows declared a non-financial interest, as a Member of the Cairngorms National Park Authority, in those items which might raise discussion on the

Cairngorms National Park but, in terms of the dispensation granted by the Standards Commission, remained to participate in discussion.

3. Recess Powers Cumhachdan Fosaidh

The Committee **NOTED** that the Recess Powers granted by the Council at its meeting on 26 June 2014 had not been exercised in relation to the business of the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee.

4. Engaging With Police and Fire and Rescue Services at Area Committee A' Com-pàirteachadh le Seirbheisean Poileis agus Smàlaidh is Teasargainn aig Comataidh Sgìreil

There had been circulated Report No NBS/18/14 dated 10 September 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform describing the role of Members in engaging with the new national services for Police and Fire and Rescue. It was provided as context for Members in considering the first round of performance reports from the national bodies at Area Committee.

The report explained that the Police and Fire (Scotland) Act 2012 had established the Police Service for Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and abolished the former territorial forces and their governing bodies from 1 April 2013. The legislation brought new roles for Members and the Council in engaging with the national services, details of which were provided. The report also contained information on effective scrutiny of performance reports.

During discussion, in addition to welcoming the ongoing role of Area Committees, Members commended the introduction of Ward Plans and emphasised the importance of Ward Forums in terms of community engagement and identifying local priorities.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the requirements on the Council for the engagement and scrutiny of Police and Fire and Rescue services;
- ii. **NOTED** the governance arrangements for this purpose through strategic, non-strategic and Area Committees as well as partnership arrangements through community planning and district partnerships;
- iii. **NOTED** that local Members had important engagement and scrutiny roles but had no role in specifying operational matters or in agreeing resource allocation; and
- iv. **AGREED** to scrutinise the performance of police and fire and rescue services based on information provide separately for the Area Committee and to make use of the good practice guidance for doing so as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

5. Police Scotland – Performance Summary Poilis na h-Alba – Geàrr-chunntas Coileanaidh

There had been circulated Report No NBS/19/14 dated 5 September 2014 by the Highland South Area Commander, Police Scotland, which provided a local summary

update to Committee Members on progress with reference to the local priorities within the Highland 2014-17 Policing Plan.

Detailed information, including statistics for the period 1 April to 31 July 2014, was provided on each of the five priorities, namely, Road Safety; Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Misuse; Antisocial Behaviour/Disorder; Crimes of Dishonesty; and Protecting People.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the positive work being undertaken was welcomed and appreciation was expressed to local officers for their hard work and prompt response to issues raised by Members;
- information was sought on the impact policing the Commonwealth Games had on the area and whether the deployment of officers to Glasgow was equitable throughout Scotland;
- reference was made to the previous item and the extract from the Collaborative Statement of Good Local Scrutiny and Engagement. There were a number of areas not covered by the Performance Summary including customer satisfaction; benchmarking data; outcomes, in some cases; and activity and performance in other local authority areas. However, it was recognised that the report was a first draft and that both the Council and Police Scotland had work to do to make it as effective as possible;
- information was requested on the outcomes of the Doorstep Crime Campaign – Operation Monarda 2;
- concern was expressed regarding the increase in crimes of dishonesty and it was requested that more detail on this priority be provided in future reports;
- it would be helpful to provide historic data for all priorities for the purpose of comparison;
- an explanation was sought as to what Test Purchasing involved;
- road safety in villages was a recurring theme at many Community Council meetings and it would be helpful to deploy more speed camera vans on non-trunk roads;
- the Driving Ambition initiative in schools was welcomed;
- Parent Councils had raised concerns regarding seatbelt use on school buses and information was sought on what role the police had in enforcing this;
- fuel theft was a significant issue in the winter months and information was requested on whether there was any targeted education and work being undertaken to address it;
- there had been a lot of concerns regarding the introduction of 101, the Police non-emergency telephone number, and feedback was sought on whether they had subsided and how often the number was being used;
- an explanation of some of the terminology would be helpful in future reports. For example, when did a report become an incident?;
- it might be beneficial to have a rolling theme, examining one priority in more depth each time a report was presented; and
- information was requested on how statistical information on complaints about the police service would be made available to Members.

Thereafter, the Area Commander having responded to the issues raised, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the issues raised during discussion be taken in to account, where appropriate, in future reports to the Committee.

6. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service – Area Committee Plan and Performance Report for 2014-15

Seirbheis Smàlaidh is Teasairginn na h-Alba – Plana Comataidh Sgìreil agus Aithisg Choileanaidh airson 2014/15

There had been circulated Report No NBS/20/14 dated 8 September 2014 by the Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue which set out the key areas of planned activity and performance identified during Ward consultation sessions in 2013. In this regard, there had also been circulated, separately:-

- i. Area Committee Plan for Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey for 2014-15 (Booklet A); and
- ii. Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee Performance Report (Booklet B).

The report explained that activity areas were identified through a range of intervention, prevention and protection activities delivered in partnership to reduce risk to the communities in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- the informative and well-presented Performance Report was welcomed and it was suggested that it would be beneficial to circulate it to Community Councils;
- information was requested on whether there were particular areas in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey where recruitment was required;
- the trend data was very helpful and, whilst there was no benchmarking against other local authority areas, the figures were so low that there was not much to be gained from it;
- concern was expressed that there had been 18 false fire alarms in April/May 2014 and the importance of premises owners, particularly those with automated systems, ensuring that alarms were not raised unnecessarily was emphasised;
- clarification was sought in relation to the Fire and Rescue Service's role in reducing road traffic collisions;
- information was requested on the frequency of road safety events in the area and when the last event had taken place in Badenoch and Strathspey. The Group Manager confirmed that he would report back to Members with this information;
- in relation to the deployment of Community Response Units to assist with incidents in other areas, information was sought on how this was recorded statistically;
- information was requested on whether the Fire and Rescue Service would still be involved in public engagement such as car washes in Fire Stations; and
- confirmation was sought that availability of water was taken in to account when carrying out risk assessments.

In relation to wider distribution of the Performance Report, it was confirmed that it was available electronically and arrangements would be made to distribute it to Community Councils in the area.

Thereafter, the Local Senior Officer having responded to the issues raised, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** both the Area Committee Plan for 2014-15 and Performance Report;
- ii. **AGREED** that the issues raised during discussion be taken in to account, where appropriate, in future reports to the Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED** that the Performance report be circulated electronically to Community Councils in the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area.

7. Communities Panel Development Leasachadh Phanail Choimhearsnachdan

Declaration of Interest: Ms J Douglas declared non-financial interests in this item as an adviser to Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport Company and a Director of Inverness Women's Aid but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that her interests did not preclude her involvement in the discussion.

There had been circulated Report No NBS/21/14 dated 10 September 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which summarised the approach to developing the Council's new Communities Panel. Members were asked to note the report and suggest any other groups that should be invited to be part of the Communities Panel.

The report explained that the Council, at its meeting on 8 May 2014, had agreed that a Communities Panel be created. This would exist alongside the Citizens' Panel and be available for responding to survey based consultations. It was intended that the Panel would be comprised of representative groups from throughout Highland. A draft list of groups was set out in Appendix 1 of the report and there would be a further opportunity for Members to discuss this at Ward Business Meetings.

During discussion, it was suggested that the following groups be added to the list:-

- Nairn Economic Initiative
- NICE (Nairn Improvement Community Enterprise)
- ARC (Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company)
- Kingussie Community Development Company
- Newtonmore Business Association
- Kingussie Business Forum

In addition, the following issues were raised:-

- information was requested on what would happen where a Community Council was in abeyance;
- it was important to engage with parents of younger children and it was suggested that toddler groups, nurseries etc be included;
- organisations such as Grantown YMCA which were not part of the Third Sector but were engaging with specific user groups should be involved;
- it was not clear whether all Community Councils, Parent Councils, Village Hall associations etc had been accounted for as they were not listed. In response, the Policy Officer confirmed that she would provide full lists to allow Members to check that all groups in their Ward had been included;

- in relation to the extensive list of Highland wide groups, it was felt that they should only be represented on a Communities Panel in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey if they had a locally nominated representative in the area; and
- it was important that the Panel was representative of the community and included a cross-section of a range of groups. There was a key role for local Members and the Ward Manager in terms of shaping the Panel and providing the right balance. In addition, local NHS representatives would have a good idea of the groups that ought to be included.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- NOTED** the approach to developing the Communities Panel outlined at section 2 of the report; and
- AGREED** that the additional representative groups suggested during discussion be included in the draft invitation list provided at Appendix 1 of the report.

8. Carbon CLEVER Càrbon CIALLACH

There had been circulated Report No NBS/22/14 dated 15 September 2014 by the Head of Policy and Reform which provided an update on the Carbon CLEVER initiative and asked Members to consider how the initiative could be developed in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey.

It was explained that, at its meeting on 27 June 2013, the Council had agreed to an initiative to achieve a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highland by 2025. The initiative, Carbon CLEVER, was launched at a conference on 8 November 2013. Achieving such an ambitious target would require strong engagement from a wide range of stakeholders across the private, public and third sectors as well as residents and communities throughout Highland. The report went on to provide information on Carbon CLEVER in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey. It also summarised a number of projects being developed as part of the initiative, many of which would have important implications for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- in relation to the stores of carbon contained within the peat, soils and woodland of the Cairngorms National Park, there was a growing issue in that clear felling by the Forestry Commission was increasing leading to a reduction in the number of mature trees;
- Badenoch and Strathspey was 65 miles from one end to another and was currently served by a variety of transport services including subsidised and community bus services and a community car scheme. However, it was not possible, for example, to use public transport to commute directly between Grantown on Spey and Kingussie. In order to reduce carbon emissions, it was essential to develop a fully integrated public transport infrastructure. In response, the Area Leader confirmed that a strategic review of community transport was being undertaken by Community Services and Members' comments would be relayed to the Chair and Director;
- it was also necessary to integrate public transport with active travel – for example, linking cycle paths with bike trailer buses – and it was suggested that a pilot project could be carried out in the Cairngorms National Park;

- with regard to the Carbon CLEVER Commuting initiative, it was hoped there would be an opportunity for people to say what their aspirations for sustainable travel were. It would be helpful to collect that information and focus on how to gather support for potential new choices. In rural areas, it might only be a short distance between villages but, if the route was a trunk road, people took their cars for safety reasons. Cycle paths linking communities would therefore have a significant impact;
- it was suggested that Members be asked to nominate individuals from their local communities to attend the Carbon CLEVER Conference;
- in relation to Collaborating on Resource Efficient Services in Nairn, information was sought on the scope of “public sector organisations”; and
- it was hoped that a number of community organisations would be able to take advantage of the additional funding available through the Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund and the Local Energy Challenge Fund.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** that the Climate Change Team work with local organisations, stakeholders and community groups to gain an insight into local opportunities and priorities to inform the Carbon CLEVER Programme Plan.

9. Redesign of Health and Social Care Services in Badenoch and Strathspey: Consultation Response

Ath-dhealbhadh Seirbheisean Slàinte is Cùraim Shòisealta ann am Bàideanach agus Srath Spè: Freagairt Cho-chomhairle

There had been circulated Report No NBS/23/14 dated 12 September 2014 by the Ward Manager which asked the Committee to homologate the Council's response to the NHS Highland Consultation on the Redesign of Health and Social Care Services in Badenoch and Strathspey.

The report explained that the Council had been invited by NHS Highland to give its response to the changes proposed to health and social care service provision in Badenoch and Strathspey and the consultation process being carried out. Ward Members had been actively engaged in both the redesign and consultation process at a local level and this was reflected in the response appended to the report.

During discussion, Members referred to the section of the response relating to Care at Home and emphasised that, whilst the Council wished to engage with and support NHS Highland in this area, it was now fundamentally an NHS Highland issue. In response, the Area Leader confirmed that the intention was to reconfigure the service to fit the needs in the area rather than allocating additional funding. Members went on to emphasise the need for a “grow your own” approach, working with schools and communities to encourage people to go in to care as a career and build community services.

Thereafter, having thanked the Ward Manager for her efforts in formulating the response, the Committee **AGREED** to homologate the consultation response attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

10. EU Regional Programmes and Funding Opportunities for Highland

Prògraman Roinneil an Aonaidh Eòrpaich agus Cothroman Maoineachaidh airson na Gàidhealtachd

There had been circulated Report No NBS/24/14 dated 9 September 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which provided a summary update of the development of the 2014-20 European funding programmes as they impacted on the Highland Council area.

It was explained that the European Union provided a broad range of funding streams, a limited number of which were either eligible to the Highlands and Islands or were of interest to the Council in seeking to develop the region. European funds were delivered in packages of seven year periods. The current period would run from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of €962bn. The report went on to provide details of Regional Funds, Inter-regional Programmes and Pan European Programmes as well as benefits to the Council.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:-

- there were significant funding streams on the way and it was important to be prepared for them;
- the new Nairn Economic Initiative had a key role in terms of identifying, prioritising and progressing a range of projects;
- key projects for Nairn were the harbour development and strategic paths, east and west. It was necessary to find fits for them in terms of seeking European funding and to tie in with enterprise and employability;
- section 6.2 of the report referred to section 3.2 of another report and further information was requested in this regard as well as clarification of the amount to be re-paid by the Council. It was confirmed that the Principal European Officer would revert to Members on this matter;
- in relation to the LEADER business plan development process being undertaken by the Cairngorms National Park, it was emphasised that this was very much in partnership with local communities and the Council;
- with regard to ESI funds, the potential interventions appeared to be quite urban-centric. Issues such as green ticketing and path networks were not exclusive to urban areas and reassurance was sought that opportunities in rural towns and villages would also be explored; and
- the importance of simplifying the grant application process as much as possible for potential applicants was emphasised.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

11. Update on Nairn Town Centre Action Plan **Fios às Ùr mu Phlana-gnìomh Meadhan Baile Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Report No NBS/25/14 dated 15 September 2014 by the Director of Development and Infrastructure which updated Members on the feedback from a consultation event aimed at addressing Town Centre Regeneration in Nairn, and subsequent progress on the preparation of a Nairn Town Centre Action Plan. This would set out a portfolio of preferred projects to increase footfall in the town centre and was intended to assist in applications for funding towards delivering such improvements.

A draft version of the Nairn Town Centre Action Plan was now being prepared, reflecting the outcomes of the event, and the report sought approval for this to be finalised and published for consultation. The consultation would enable officers to

consider any comments when progressing the Action Plan towards adoption as non-statutory Supplementary Guidance.

Members welcomed the progress that had been made following the charrette event, including meetings with the Planning and Development Service and the Nairn Economic Initiative being kick-started. Other comments were made as follows:-

- activities and events had a vital role in town centre regeneration;
- community expectations had been raised by the consultation and it was important that some of the shorter-term projects were implemented as soon as possible. Those who had indicated a willingness to be involved should be kept informed of progress;
- it was important that any changes to street cleaning arrangements did not cause detriment to the vennels around Nairn High Street; and
- car parking in Nairn town centre required to be made 'greener' in a low maintenance manner and it was suggested that this be looked at as part of the overall design for that area.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the shared priorities identified by participants at the Town Centre event;
- ii. **AGREED** that a draft version of the Nairn Town Centre Action Plan be finalised and published for consultation, based on the structure and format presented at Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED** that Members and officers work in collaboration with community representatives in delivering the outcomes identified.

12. Grounds Maintenance Performance Monitoring Report Aithisg Sgrùdaidh Dèanadais a thaobh Gleidheadh Raointean

There had been circulated Report No NBS/26/14 dated 8 September 2014 by the Director of Community Services which detailed performance management information for the Grounds Maintenance Services to the end of August 2014.

It was explained that Community Services was responsible for a wide range of horticultural-related activities including the maintenance of grass in public open spaces; designing and planting of flower and shrub beds; pruning vegetation and trees; and inspection and maintenance of play areas. There were approximately 1,069,491 square metres of public open and amenity space in the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Wards and details of the maintained areas and numbers of annual tasks were set out in Appendix A of the report. Activities were carried out to the standard specified in the Grounds Maintenance Service Level Agreement and Appendix B of the report provided details of Grass Cutting Amenity Standards. The report also provided information on asset management; contract supervision; management actions; and consultation with Ward Members.

During discussion, the following points were considered:-

- Members praised the local Contracts Monitoring Officer for meeting concerns in relation to grounds maintenance in a timely fashion. In this regard it was important the agreed standards were met and a briefing note detailing progress with this was suggested for local Community Councils;

- it was welcomed that the mapping exercise to provide a database of all the grass cutting areas was to be communicated to Community Councils; and
- if the funding of grounds maintenance was to change in the future, local Members and communities would be consulted prior to action being taken to increase or lower standards. Alternative solutions to reductions in funding, such as community self-help, would also be sought.

In response to Members, it was clarified that Garden Aid provided assistance to people with difficulties maintaining their own garden. Grass cutting standards included both a maximum height prior to cutting and a minimum height after cutting to ensure mowers were not set too low.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the performance management and remedial action information provided on the grounds maintenance service set out in the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the management actions taken to address the performance issues identified; and
- iii. **AGREED** to review required service standards at future Ward Business Meetings.

13. Winter Maintenance Plan for 2014/15 Plana Cumail Suas a' Gheamhraidh airson 2014/15

There had been circulated Report No NBS/27/14 dated 8 September 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on winter maintenance preparations and arrangements for the 2014/15 winter period and invited the Committee to approve the Winter Maintenance Plans for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area.

It was explained that the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy was in place to ensure a consistent level of service between Areas and, as far as possible, the safety of drivers/pedestrians. Each Area prepared its own Winter Maintenance Plan which set out the operational details required to deliver a service and comply with the Council's Policy. The report provided detailed information on forecast/decision making; operatives; vehicles and plant; treatments; salt; provision of grit/salt bins; coordination and support for other Services; exceptional conditions; and community self-help.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- the B9007 should have been marked as a secondary route on the map of Badenoch and Strathspey (B&S), as it was on the Nairn map;
- the Area Community Services Manager was asked to confirm to the B&S Members whether the spare winter maintenance vehicle for Inverness, Nairn, and B&S would be stored in B&S, as had previously been requested;
- clarification was sought and received that the pre-treatment of roads the evening before severe weather was forecast was only undertaken on Priority One routes;
- footpath tractors had been allocated on the basis of historical need, with four allocated to B&S, and one to Nairn, although a sub-contracted vehicle was also available in Nairn; and
- it was confirmed that target gritting times would be monitored and additional vehicles procured if and when required.

Thereafter, the Committee **APPROVED** the Winter Maintenance Plans for Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area for 2014/15, including the priority road maps presented in Appendix B of the report.

14. Housing Performance Report – 1 April to 30 June 2014

Aithisg Dèanadais a thaobh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean gu 30 Ògmhios 2014

Declaration of Interest: Mr L Fraser declared a non-financial interest in this item as a Sub-Contractor for the Housing Service in Nairn but, having applied the test outlined in Paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, concluded that his interest did not preclude his involvement in the discussion.

There is circulated Report No NBS/28/14 dated 2 September 2014 by the Director of Community Services which provided information on how the Housing Section performed in relation to Scottish Social Housing Charter and other performance indicators during the first quarter of 2014/15.

The report explained that the Scottish Housing Regulator had set out the performance indicators it would use in its scrutiny of landlords. These replaced statutory performance indicators for housing from April 2013. Statistics were provided on repairs, tenancy management, rent arrears and homelessness/homeless prevention. Information on other performance indicators for housing management was presented in Appendix 1 of the report.

During discussion, Members expressed a preference for housing allocations staff being retained locally wherever possible and not centralised in Inverness. Ideally, Badenoch and Strathspey should retain their own Housing Officer but a joint service with Nairn was preferable to allocations being taken over by Inverness based staff who would not have the same level of local knowledge.

Attention was drawn to emergency external repair work that was required in the centre of Grantown to the buildings which were both Council and privately owned. The Area Community Services Manager was asked to investigate the procedure for tackling this.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on Housing performance in the period 1 April to 30 June 2014.

15. Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets Programme

Prògram Rothaireachd, Coiseachd agus Sràidean nas Sàbhailte

There had been circulated Report No NBS/29/14 dated 8 September 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve a project delivered through the Scottish Government funding for Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets (CWSS) for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The report explained that the CWSS Programme was funded directly by the Scottish Government and aimed to encourage sustainable and active travel to school by improving safety and removing barriers to walking and cycling. The Council's Road Safety Unit worked with schools to produce School Travel Plans which focused on the journey to/from school and demonstrated the school's commitment to developing

Safer Routes to School. The CWSS programme budget for 2014/15 was £348,000, a minimum of 36% of which had to be spent on cycling related projects, and schools could bid for up to £30,000 in any one year. Projects up to the value of £3,000 could be approved by the Road Safety Unit, allowing immediate implementation.

The Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the Safer Routes to School Project detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- ii. **NOTED** that the Road Safety Unit would continue to work with schools to develop further Safer RRTS Projects for future years.

16. Landfill Communities Fund Maoin Làraich Sgudail Coimhearsnachd

There had been circulated Report No NBS/30/14 dated 18 August 2014 by the Director of Community Services which invited Members to approve two applications to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund (LCF).

The report summarised the background to the LCF and explained that the Council, as a landfill operator, distributed its LCF to local biodiversity conservation projects with a maximum contribution of £10,000 to any one project annually, subject to approval by the appropriate Area Committee, as agreed by the Community Services Committee at its meeting on 15 May 2014.

During discussion, Members for Badenoch and Strathspey expressed a wish to consider in greater detail, at a Ward Business meeting, the costings and possible alternative funding sources for the application by RSPB Scotland. The Area Leader voiced approval for that application, particularly its environmental and educational focus.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the application in respect of Kingussie Community Hydro; and
- ii. **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with Badenoch and Strathspey Ward Members, to determine the application by RSPB Scotland.

17. Capital Projects – Investing in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Pròiseactan Calpa – A' Tasgadh ann an Inbhir Narann agus Bàideanach agus Srath Spè

There had been circulated Report No NBS/31/14 dated 20 August 2014 by the Director of Finance which listed the capital projects included in the Council's capital programme being delivered in the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area in financial year 2014/15 and the in-year budgets for the projects.

The report was presented annually to inform Members of the planned capital projects in the area and was not designed to update on project progress. Should that be required, information on specific projects would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee or to Ward Business Meetings as appropriate.

The Committee **NOTED** the budgeted capital projects being delivered in the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area in 2014/15.

18. Nairn Common Good Fund **Maoin Math Coimhearsnachd Inbhir Narann**

There had been circulated Report No NBS/32/14 dated 12 September 2014 by the Director of Finance and the Inverness City Manager which asked Members to note the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF) as shown in the Quarter 1 Monitoring Statement and provided an update on the ongoing review of the NCGF which was on target for completion by the end of this financial year.

The report explained that work continued on preparing a detailed and accurate Asset Register and this would be presented to the Committee for consideration. In addition, an Investment Strategy would be brought forward and a range of options would be identified for formal consideration in readiness for the meeting of the Committee on 4 December 2014. It was emphasised that considerable improvements had been made to the management and governance of the NCGF.

During discussion, Members praised the improved management of the Fund and welcomed the work being undertaken on the Asset Register. Concern was expressed about the missed rent reviews for the Parkdean lease in 1999 and 2006 and resolution of this issue was called for. However, this and other issues relating to the NCGF were to be considered by the Council in October 2014, as all 80 Councillors were Trustees of the Fund.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. the position of the Nairn Common Good Fund as shown in the Quarter 1 Revenue Monitoring Statement against budget;
- ii. the ongoing progress in the implementation of the management plan for the NCGF with a completion date of 1 April 2015; and
- iii. the progress being made on the provision of an Investment Strategy for the Nairn Common Good Fund.

19. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

The Committee **NOTED** the Minutes of Meeting of the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee held on 11 June 2014, as approved by the Council on 26 June 2014.

The meeting concluded at 1.45 pm.